



2003 California School Recognition Program

Rubric for Scoring

Distinguished Middle School Applications

This rubric provides a comprehensive set of quality statements that reflect a consensus of the education community about the elements that should be present in an exemplary standards-based middle school like that called for in *Taking Center Stage*. The rubric will be used to evaluate 2003 Distinguished Middle School applications based on a four-point scale (4 signifies high quality). Each level of the rubric is designed to be a holistic description, not a checklist. Evaluators will assign the score that *most closely resembles* the information provided in the application as a whole. Schools selected for recognition typically receive scores of 3 or 4. To receive those scores, schools must provide specific examples and other evidence in their responses. *Applicants are not expected to receive scores of level 4 in all areas. In some instances, level 4 describes an ideal toward which schools are encouraged to strive.* Individual schools may use the rubric for self-assessment.

1 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Vision and Standards Describe the process used by your school community for developing a common vision of what students should know and be able to do by the end of 8th grade. Indicate the roles played by members of the school community. Discuss how the school and district are implementing state academic and other content standards. Describe how the school and district evaluate and use state and local assessment data to adjust the school's improvement plan. Describe how results are communicated to the community. *Statewide measures include: the Academic Performance Index (API); Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) system (Stanford 9 and California Standards Tests, including the 7th grade writing assessment); Golden State Examinations; and California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Local outcomes should include data from standards-based benchmark assessments for district-defined priorities.*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Representatives of <i>all</i> segments of the school community—staff, students, families, and community members—collaborate to establish a clear vision of what all students should know and be able to do upon graduation. The vision addresses the CAHSEE, represents current research and practice on effective middle grade teaching and learning, and reflects the cultural diversity of the student population. The vision statement is periodically updated.	School staff, the school site council, and selected parents collaborate to establish a clear vision of what all students should know and be able to do. The vision reflects current research and practice and acknowledges the cultural diversity of the community. The vision statement is periodically reviewed and adjusted.	Administrators and some teachers determine what students should know and be able to do. The vision statement is generally consistent with the curriculum and is periodically reviewed.	The school has a statement of philosophy and goals that is kept on file at the school. It may not be consistent with the curriculum or reflected in day-to-day operations.
The school has set high and consistent standards-based expectations for all learners. Standards for English/language arts, math, science, history/social science, and English Language Development are in place, and are aligned to State Board adopted standards. Standards for other disciplines are in place or are in development.	The school has high expectations for all students. Local standards in English/language arts, math, science, and history/social science are in place and are being aligned to state standards. Standards for other areas are in the discussion or planning stage.	The school has high expectations for most students. Work is underway to develop local standards in English/language arts, math, science, and history/social science.	The application says very little regarding expectations for students. The district has adopted the state standards in English/language arts, math, science, and history/social science.
The vision statement and the results of the school evaluation process are communicated to all segments of the school community in a variety of ways and in multiple languages (as appropriate) that extend or enhance the legally required School Accountability Report Card. The SARC is readily available on the district's web site and contains additional information on school programs.	The vision statement and the results of the school evaluation process are communicated to families and other representatives of the school community in the legally required School Accountability Report Card. The SARC is readily available on the district's web site.	There is limited communication with families and the community regarding the school's vision or evaluation results. A SARC has been developed.	Strategies for reporting school evaluation results to families and the community are not discussed. A SARC is being developed.
The school community examines local and state student and school assessment data on an ongoing basis to see how students are meeting statewide standards. Results are used to identify needs including improving instructional practices and reallocating fiscal, personnel, and material resources. These changes are integrated into the school improvement plan. The data is disaggregated by student characteristics—English learners, gender, ethnicity, Title I program participation, students with disabilities, GATE, etc.	Teachers and some members of the school community examine local and state student and school assessment data to make instructional and budget decisions regarding the school program, and to adjust the school improvement plan. The data is disaggregated by selected student characteristics.	Leadership staff examines local and state student and school data to make instructional decisions about the school program. It is unclear if the results of the analysis are incorporated into the plan. The data is disaggregated by some student characteristics.	Administrators and selected teachers review student and school data. Some teachers may make instructional decisions for their own classes. Disaggregation of data is not discussed.

2 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Student Assessment Describe how local, school, and classroom assessment information are linked to statewide assessment in order to improve student performance and to ensure progress toward schoolwide improvement. Describe how the school is able to monitor and report students' learning of standards, both schoolwide and for individual students. Discuss how teachers in all departments/disciplines use assessment information to modify curriculum and instruction. Provide examples of assessment in English/language arts (E/LA) and mathematics, including but not limited to: analysis of student work, writing samples, district-developed assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, interdepartmental/discipline collaboration, vertical articulation, etc. Provide examples of opportunities students have to evaluate their work against the standards. Describe how families are informed about their students' efforts in achieving standards. *Assessment methods may include, but should not be limited to: writing samples, teacher and student evaluation of student work (rubrics, project scoring guides, portfolios, grades); district-developed assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, and assessments linked to instructional materials; and, publishers' norm-referenced tests.*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
There is a local assessment system in place that links local, school and classroom assessment to statewide assessment. Staff has reached professional consensus regarding the means by which student and school progress toward achieving standards can be measured and communicated.	A local assessment system is mostly in place or in final stages of development. Staff have reached professional consensus regarding what students should know at each grade level. They are working on how students will demonstrate that knowledge. Student and school progress toward achieving standards is measured and communicated.	Development of a local assessment system in progress. Teachers are in the process of reaching agreement about what students should know at each grade level.	Teacher agreement on what students should know and be able to do is not addressed.
Teachers use assessment information to plan or modify curriculum and instruction and to prepare students to pass the CAHSEE. Teachers' interventions for students needing assistance in meeting the standards are based on assessment results. Examples are provided in English/ language arts, mathematics and at least one other content area.	Teachers use assessment information to plan or modify curriculum and instruction and to prepare students to pass the CAHSEE. Teachers apply appropriate interventions. Examples are provided in English/ language arts <u>and</u> mathematics.	Teachers periodically use student achievement information to plan for curriculum and instruction, but there is no regular schoolwide process. Assessment information may be used to prepare students for the CAHSEE.	Assessment of student performance is viewed as separate from instruction, typically end-of unit or semester tests. The assessments are used to determine grades. In general, instruction and curriculum are unaffected by assessment. The CAHSEE is not addressed.
Teachers regularly share with colleagues student work related to the achievement of standards. They use rubrics to demonstrate levels of proficiency and determine their next teaching steps.	In some subject areas, teachers meet at least quarterly to analyze student work and to plan their next teaching steps. Teachers apply consistent criteria in judging student work.	In some subject areas, teachers meet at least twice a year to analyze student work. It is not clear whether they apply consistent criteria in judging student work. Teachers as individuals rather than as a team examine student work to make decisions.	Teachers rely heavily on teacher or text-generated tests and work sheets to evaluate student work. Teachers and administrators may examine individual student test scores to make decisions.
Students are expected to be responsible and productive and to hold high expectations for themselves. They frequently analyze their own work against criteria, reflect on their progress, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Student report cards are based on progress toward achieving standards and address social, emotional, and physical development.	Students are expected to be responsible and productive. Students occasionally analyze their own work, reflect on their progress, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Report cards are being developed that include their progress toward standards.	Students rarely analyze their own work. They depend primarily on their teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Discussion is beginning regarding student report cards that include their progress toward standards.	Students depend on their teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses rather than by analyzing their own work. Report cards do not include progress towards standards.
Families routinely receive information about grade level standards, what is expected for proficient work based on state-adopted performance levels, and how their students can improve their achievement. Families of English learners receive information in their primary language.	Families receive information about their students' assessment results. Efforts are made to communicate students' results to families in their primary language(s).	Families receive limited information regarding their students' test results.	Strategies for reporting individual student assessment results to families are not described.

3 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: Curriculum and Instructional Practices Describe how your school provides a comprehensive core curriculum in all subject areas that is articulated across grade levels and with feeder elementary schools and destination high schools, where possible. Discuss how your curriculum is aligned or is being aligned to local and state standards. Use examples from English/language arts and mathematics to describe curriculum alignment and articulation. Discuss how standards-aligned thematic units are designed and implemented by teams of teachers. Discuss how all students are provided with a variety of learning experiences. Describe the selection of standards-based instructional materials. Discuss planning underway to align curriculum to standards in order to prepare students for the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). **NOTE: THIS SECTION WILL BE WEIGHTED DOUBLE IN THE SCORING PROCESS.**

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
A balanced, comprehensive, standards-aligned core curriculum is provided to all students in all curricular areas. Teachers of the same subject and/or grade work together to align instruction to the knowledge and skills described in standards. Examples are provided in English/language arts and mathematics. All students are provided opportunities for electives, choice and exploration. Teachers understand the developmental needs of students and provide a curricular program that is responsive to these needs. Research on current middle grade practices is used in curriculum planning.	A comprehensive core curriculum in all areas is provided to all students. Curriculum is aligned to local and state standards in some areas. Some students are provided opportunities for electives, choice and exploration. Teachers are aware of the developmental needs of students. Curriculum planning is based on current educational research and knowledge of best practices.	There is a plan to align core curriculum to local and state standards and some efforts are underway in some areas. A comprehensive core curriculum is provided to most students. Curriculum planning is based on knowledge of best practices.	Discussions about aligning curriculum to standards are just beginning. It is not clear that a comprehensive core curriculum is provided for all students. Some may receive a different curriculum based upon perceived ability levels.
The core curriculum is articulated across grade levels, and with feeder elementary schools and destination high schools where possible. Examples are provided in English/language arts and mathematics. Staff discusses CAHSEE articulation issues with the destination high school(s). The school has an ongoing, active intervention program to ensure that any student who may be at-risk for <u>not</u> passing the CAHSEE is given appropriate and timely remedial supports.	There is articulation of some core curriculum areas across grade levels, and with feeder elementary schools and destination high school(s). Efforts are underway in other areas. Examples are provided in English/ language arts and mathematics. Staff is knowledgeable about the CAHSEE and the standards that are reflected in it. There is an intervention program for students who may be at-risk for not passing the CAHSEE.	Staff meets periodically for curriculum articulation across grade levels, and there are plans for articulation with feeder elementary schools and destination high school(s). Staff is familiar with the standards that are reflected in the CAHSEE.	Alignment and articulation of the curriculum is not addressed. Planning is underway regarding the use of standards-based instruction to prepare students to pass the CAHSEE.
Teams of teachers design and implement standards-aligned thematic units of core curricula that integrate skills and knowledge across subject-matter lines.	Teams of teachers design and implement standards-aligned thematic units of instruction in some curricular areas that integrate skills and knowledge across subject-matter lines.	Teams of teachers are beginning to design and implement thematic units of instruction in some core curricula.	Individual teachers design and implement thematic units of instruction in their classrooms.
The staff uses a variety of instructional methods to meet the needs of all students. There is a balance between independent and collaborative student work, teacher-directed, and student-centered instruction. Extensions are provided for students who seek additional challenges.	A variety of instructional methods is being used in all classrooms and curricular areas. Instructional groupings vary with the nature of the task. Students work in groups and independently. Extensions are provided for students who seek additional challenges.	Lecture is a dominant instructional mode in most classrooms and curricular areas. The school is working on strategies to provide students with a greater variety of learning experiences. Individual students receive additional help on an as-needed basis.	Most learning takes place through whole-group instruction and traditional ability groups. Strategies focus on teacher needs.
Members of the school community participate in the selection of standards-based instructional materials. Materials are examined to determine their effectiveness in meeting the needs of all students. Materials reflect the diversity of California's population. Community resources are used to enhance the curriculum with real-world experiences.	School and district staff solicit community opinion in the selection of standards-based instructional materials. The process for reviewing alignment to standards is clearly described. There is a process for evaluating the effectiveness of materials. Efforts are underway to enhance the curriculum with real-world experiences.	School and district staff select textbooks and instructional materials. There is a plan to align materials to standards. It is not clear whether the materials are examined for effectiveness.	School staff are involved in the selection of instructional materials. There is no discussion regarding the alignment of materials to standards. The effectiveness of the materials is not addressed.

4 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: Teacher Professionalism Discuss how professional development prepares all teachers, administrators, and other staff to help students achieve local and state standards through effective standards-based lessons in all curricular areas, particularly in English/language arts (E/LA) and mathematics. Describe how professional development enhances the understanding of student developmental needs. Describe how professional development programs are selected and evaluated. Discuss the processes that support teacher professionalism. Describe the opportunities that are available for teachers to collaborate, broaden their knowledge, participate in decision making, and share information with teachers from other grade levels. Discuss professional development provided for other school personnel. Discuss how new teachers are selected and supported. *Professional development activities should reflect awareness of: Designs for Learning, the California Standards for the Quality and Effectiveness of Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs, and Taking Center Stage. Discussion may also include, but is not limited to: leadership academies; subject matter projects; networks and consortia; professional organizations; the Bilingual Teacher Training Program; teacher education institutes; and, peer assistance and review.*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
Professional development focuses on preparing teachers to help students achieve standards. There is a comprehensive, long-range professional development plan for teachers and administrators that includes the importance of understanding student developmental needs. Examples are provided in English/language arts and mathematics. The plan is evaluated based on student progress in meeting standards.	Professional development focuses on preparing teachers to help students achieve standards. There is a professional development program for teachers and administrators. Examples are provided in English/language arts and mathematics. Plans are underway to judge its effectiveness based upon assessment data.	A professional development program is being developed that will focus on helping students achieve standards. Its effectiveness will be based upon student progress data.	Individual teachers determine professional development based upon their interests and classroom needs. A professional development program is not addressed.
Teachers as a group reach consensus about curriculum, instruction, discipline, teacher and program evaluation, school operations, etc. Frequent opportunities are routinely scheduled for teachers to collaborate, share educational research, reflect on classroom practices, and confer about specific student challenges. Teachers and staff are recognized for making exceptional efforts with students. All school staff are viewed as an essential part of a team to enable students to succeed.	Teachers frequently make decisions about curriculum, instruction, discipline, teacher and program evaluation, school operations, etc. There are many opportunities for teachers to collaborate, share educational research, and reflect on classroom practices. There is recognition that everyone plays a part in student success.	A few teachers serve on committees. Efforts are underway to increase teacher involvement in decision-making. There are occasional opportunities to collaborate. Other school staff may be recognized as resources for student learning, but only relative to job title and function.	The principal makes most of the decisions with suggestions from selected teachers. There is no discussion of opportunities for teachers to collaborate. School staff members other than teachers are not recognized as contributors to student achievement.
Teachers and staff participate in professional development that is aligned with their school's standards-based instructional materials. Teachers and staff also provide staff development for their colleagues. Health/PE teachers, Pupil Personnel Services staff, school nurses, and classified employees participate in professional activities in their fields.	Teachers participate in a variety of professional development activities based on state standards. Opportunities are provided at staff meetings for teachers to share what they learned. Other school staff members are included as appropriate.	Teachers participate in professional development, but support by the district or school is limited. Opportunities to share information are limited.	Teachers do not attend professional development activities consistently. Financial support is minimal.
Sharing of student results from one grade level to the next is a schoolwide process for all subjects. Teachers have regular opportunities to articulate with feeder elementary and destination high school staff about the students they serve and to facilitate seamless transitions for students and families. Everyone is knowledgeable about students' growth and development.	Student results are shared from one grade level to the next in most areas. Teachers have some opportunities to articulate with feeder elementary and destination high school staff about the children they serve and to facilitate positive transitions for students and families.	Student results are shared from one grade level to the next in some areas. Articulation activities with elementary and high schools are being planned.	Sharing of student results between grade levels is minimally addressed. There is no discussion of articulation between grade levels or with elementary and high schools.
New teachers are carefully selected, assigned, supported and monitored with a professional development plan. A qualified support network is provided throughout the first two years of teaching.	New teachers are selected, assigned, supported, and monitored with a professional development plan.	A mentor teacher provides the only support for new teachers.	There is no evidence of special support for new teachers.

5 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—TEACHING AND LEARNING: Educational Technology and Library Media Services Describe the library media services that support teaching and learning. Describe your plan for technology use at the school site and the ongoing process of integrating technology into the total school program. Include accommodations to ensure appropriate technical assistance for staff and students. Discuss how professional development needs of staff are met, both in terms of enhancing technology skills and in integration of technology into the curriculum. Describe how students, certificated staff, library media teachers, and other support staff are provided with information and learning resources. Include examples of technology and library usage data (e.g., *the number of computers, frequency of usage, population of users, use of the Internet, book circulation, etc.*) Describe the extent of electronic networking infrastructure throughout the site and beyond. Describe how the technology and library media services have contributed to improved student achievement.

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Learning activities are supported by a high-quality library media center with a credentialed library media teacher, support staff, current technology, and learning resources for all subjects to meet the diverse needs of all students, including those with learning disabilities and physical challenges. The center is flexibly scheduled and available to students and families beyond the school day.	Learning activities are supported by a library media center with a full-time staff, current technology, and learning resources. Accommodations are available for students with special needs. The library media center is available to students and families beyond the school day.	Learning activities are supported by a library that is open part-time with staff and some technology and learning resources. There is limited discussion of accommodations for students with special needs.	Learning activities are supported by a library kept open by volunteers. Accommodations for students with special needs are not available.
A plan for technology use provides a clear vision of the instructional and administrative advantages of technology. Evaluation of effectiveness is built into the planning structure. Software, video, and online resources are selected on the basis of proven ability to raise achievement of specific standards. Electronic networking is in place at the site and beyond.	A plan for technology use focuses on instructional learning and administrative issues. Implementation of electronic networking at the site and beyond is underway.	The district/school has a limited technology plan, either at the district or site level. Planning of electronic networking at the site and beyond is underway.	A district or school technology plan is not discussed.
Technology is used to enhance achievement and is integrated into all regular, categorical and special programs. Examples show that teaching, learning and administration are accomplished with appropriate technology. It is used to help students increase knowledge and skills, expand the depth and scope of the curriculum, and obtain information outside the classroom.	Technology is used to enhance achievement in many regular, categorical, and special programs. Technology is used in teaching, learning and the administration of school programs. It is used to help students increase their knowledge and skills, and expand the depth and scope of the curriculum.	Technology is used primarily to assist teachers in the management of the instructional program. The school is developing a program in which technology will be used to expand the curriculum.	Technology is used primarily for record-keeping and data collection. Student access to technology is limited to beginning computer literacy or drill and practice.
A designated on-site technology lead person/coach has been identified for on-site technology and provides assistance in a timely manner. Ongoing training is provided for the effective use of technology in teaching and learning, including accountability.	Staff is available on site to provide technical assistance. Additional assistance may be available at the district. On-going training is provided for effective use of technology in teaching and learning.	Some technology assistance is available, and some training for use of technology in teaching and learning is provided.	On-site assistance is not available on a regular basis. Training is rarely offered.
All students and staff have access to and use an array of information and learning resources in a variety of ways. Specific usage data demonstrates frequent and increased use of the Internet, networks, databases, etc., by teachers, students, and families that supports student achievement. School staff uses technology to organize, analyze, and manage student work and achievement data to modify instruction.	All students and staff have access to information and learning resources at a computer lab accessible during and after normal school hours. Teachers are beginning to use technology to organize and analyze student work and assessment data.	Technology is available to those most interested or most in need, but less accessible to the general population. Use by staff is limited.	There is some access to electronic information and learning resources. Technology is not used to analyze student work or achievement data.
In order to plan for and acquire appropriate technology, the district or school collaborates with a variety of businesses, industry, community groups, funding sources, and networks ¹ appropriate to the community and region.	In order to plan for and acquire appropriate technology resources, the district or school collaborates with some businesses, industry, community groups, and networks and is exploring others.	Collaboration with business, industry, community groups, and networks is limited.	There is no evidence of collaboration with entities outside the school.

¹ May include but not limited to: the California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP), California Learning Resource Network (CLRN), California Statewide Master Agreements for Resources in Technology (C-SMART), Technology Information Center for Administrative Leadership (TICAL), etc.

6 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING: School Culture Describe the culture of the school and how it supports student success in achieving standards. Discuss how the school demonstrates the values of an exemplary middle school including such key elements as instructional strategies appropriate for the developmental characteristics of young adolescents, class scheduling issues, and exploratory curricula. Describe opportunities for students to provide service to their communities and to engage in organized service learning experiences. Discuss how the school culture promotes positive character traits and good citizenship. Describe the strategies used to ensure that students feel a sense of connection to the school and do not "fall through the cracks."

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
The culture of the school reflects a commitment to a standards-based educational system where all students can and will be successful and achieve grade level standards. Standards-based education is the school's focus and this commitment is demonstrated to and by staff, students, and the community in a variety of ways. The developmental characteristics of young adolescents are strategically incorporated into the school's academic goals.	The culture of the school encourages all students to be academically successful, and efforts are under way to create a schoolwide focus on standards-based education. The developmental characteristics of young adolescents are strategically incorporated into the school's academic goals.	The school culture reflects a desire to help students succeed. Work on standards-based learning is in the beginning stages. The developmental characteristics of young adolescents are strategically incorporated into the school's academic goals.	The school's primary focus appears to be classroom management and curriculum coverage. Standards-based learning is generally addressed.
The culture of the school supports all students' growth and development in social, emotional, and physical domains, as well as academic. Staff is knowledgeable about and committed to promoting a comprehensive youth development program.	The culture of the school encourages student growth and development in social, emotional, and physical domains as well as academic.	The staff of the school is just beginning to be aware of the social, emotional, and physical domains as important to student learning.	There is minimal evidence of efforts at the school to promote youth development.
The school seeks to develop and reinforce positive character traits such as caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness, through a systematic approach that includes adult modeling, curriculum integration, and school policies and practices. Opportunities are provided for all students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school and the community.	The staff as a whole promotes and models positive character traits. Opportunities are provided for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school and the community.	Individual teachers and staff promote and model positive character traits. Limited opportunities are provided for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school and the community.	There is minimal evidence of efforts at the school to support positive character traits.
Organizational structures to support student learning are in place. The master schedule provides for use of block time and flexible scheduling. It encourages the use of a variety of instructional methods and materials appropriate to the needs of young adolescents. After-school tutoring and care are provided, either at the school or within the community, and are connected to the regular academic program.	The school is examining its organizational structures to support student learning. The master schedule encourages the use of a variety of scheduling and instructional strategies that are appropriate to the needs of young adolescents. After-school tutoring and care may be provided.	Planning is underway to develop a master schedule and instructional strategies that will more effectively meet the needs of young adolescents.	The schedule closely resembles the traditional high school structure of several periods a day, with a different teacher for each course.
All students have opportunities to participate in exploratory and elective courses which augment the core curriculum.	The importance of exploratory and elective courses is discussed. These courses are available to most students.	Exploratory and elective courses are limited or are available only to some groups of students.	There is no evidence that exploratory or elective courses are provided for students.
The school has a comprehensive support system for guidance and counseling that includes all three domains—academic, personal/social development, and career awareness. Services are provided to all students.	The school has an established guidance and counseling program that is provided to most students.	The school has begun to implement a guidance and counseling program. Services are available to students upon request.	There is minimal evidence of efforts to provide a guidance and counseling program.
A successful system is in place to ensure that all students are connected to the school and community through the academic program, academic competitions, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, student leadership activities, group membership, clubs, sports, service organizations, and service learning, etc. There is evidence that most students participate and that participation reflects the diversity of the school.	A system is in place to connect all students to the school and community through the academic program, academic competitions, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, student leadership activities, group membership, clubs, sports, service organizations, and service learning, etc. Evidence shows that many students participate in a variety of school-sponsored activities.	Efforts to connect students to the school are limited. Students who qualify are encouraged to participate in school-sponsored activities. The activities have open membership and tryouts. Participation often follows a pattern determined by students' peer and social groups.	School-sponsored activities are independent from academic learning. Evidence indicates that few students participate in school activities, or the level of participation is not addressed.

7 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING: Comprehensive Academic and Guidance Counseling Discuss how your school provides academic counseling and guidance for middle-level students and their families. Describe the processes in place to encourage all students to aspire to academic success. Describe the roles teachers and other staff play in providing academic advisement. Provide examples of how personal learning plans are developed for students. Describe the strategies used to ensure that students are prepared for a broad range of academic and career options in high school, including special programs to support students from groups traditionally under-represented in colleges and universities. (e.g., *Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)*, *the College Readiness Program (CRP)*, etc.)

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
The school encourages all students to aspire to academic success. There is a well-articulated counseling program supported by an active teacher advisement program. Services are supported by ongoing staff development. Counselors and teachers provide academic and career guidance and information, encourage student leadership skills, and discuss academic or personal issues.	The school encourages all students to aspire to academic success. Academic, career, and personal counseling is available to most students. The school counselor(s) and other staff members provide academic and career information and guidance, and encourage student leadership skills.	A counseling program is provided, but on a limited basis. As resources are available, the school counselor(s) provide academic and career guidance and encourage student leadership skills. Individual teachers may be involved in advising students about high school, college, and/or career goals.	A counseling program is not provided. Little evidence is provided that teachers are involved in advising students about high school, college, and/or career goals.
All students have the support of adults who serve as mentors or advisors and advocates. Small groups of students may be assigned to a teacher, team of teachers, an administrator or a counselor for long-term, multiple year personal and academic support. Regularly scheduled meetings are designed to develop close, trusting relationships between students and adults, increase student engagement in learning, develop students' study skills, and nurture feelings of self-esteem and belonging.	Many students have the support of adults who serve as mentors or advisors and advocates. Students are assigned to their home room teacher or a counselor to develop relationships between students and adults, increase student engagement in learning, develop students' study skills, and nurture feelings of self-esteem and belonging.	Students may be assigned to a school counselor or another staff member to increase student engagement in learning or to develop student study skills.	The relationship between students and adults is not addressed.
All students, including those experiencing difficulty in achieving academic success, have personal learning plans that establish a meaningful course of study in preparation for success in high school. These plans are developed through collaboration with the student, staff, and families. The plans are reviewed and revised as needed.	Most students, including students with special needs, receive guidance in developing personal learning plans with their families. The plans are revised as needed.	Only at-risk or special needs students have personal learning plans in accordance with categorical program requirements.	There is no discussion of personal learning plans.
Counselors and teachers prepare students for a broad range of academic options in high school. Information is provided to parents and students regarding the courses needed for success in high school, preparation for higher education, and career exploration programs.	Students receive some academic counseling to prepare them for a broad range of academic options in high school. Most parents receive information regarding the courses needed for success in high school, preparation for higher education, and career exploration programs.	Only students who do well in academic course work are encouraged to prepare for college and consider career goals. Their parents may be informed of the courses needed for success in high school and higher education.	There is minimal evidence that students are given help or encouragement to aspire to academic success or to develop high school and career goals. Parents are not informed of the courses needed for success in high school and higher education.
There are special programs to support students from groups traditionally under-represented in colleges and universities in completing courses that prepare them for academic success in high school and higher education. A variety of support strategies are provided to help them succeed.	Special programs support students from groups traditionally under-represented in colleges and universities in completing courses that prepare them for academic success in high school and beyond.	There are general references to programs that encourage students from groups traditionally under-represented in colleges and universities to take courses that prepare them for academic success in high school.	No efforts are described to encourage students from groups traditionally under-represented in college and universities to take courses that prepare them for success in high school.

8 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING: Students At-Risk and With Special Needs Discuss the identification and assessment process of students at-risk and with special needs at your school. Describe the programs and strategies used by the school to ensure access to and success in the regular curriculum. Discuss how student differences are valued as assets. Discuss the programs and strategies used by the school to assist English learners (ELs). Describe support for school staff to assist students with disabilities to achieve individualized education plan (IEP) goals, progress in the regular curriculum, and be educated with non-disabled students. Describe the extended learning activities. *Students at-risk and with special needs include but are not limited to: gifted and talented students; English learners; students from culturally and ethnically diverse families; students not achieving their identified learning potential; students with attendance problems, discipline problems, family-related issues, health-related issues, and nutrition-related issues; students with mobility/ transfer issues; and, students receiving special education services.*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
The school takes responsibility for active and early assessment and identification of students at-risk and with special needs. Coordinated student support services may include school guidance and counseling to improve attendance, and services provided by community agencies. A schoolwide student study team and family-school compacts identify how the school, family, and community will help the student to succeed. Interventions and student work are reviewed and evaluated frequently.	School, family and community resources are used to assist at-risk and special needs students. Responsibilities are not clearly defined. Strategies such as a student study team and family-school compacts identify how the school and family will help the student succeed. Interventions and student work are reviewed frequently.	The school takes limited responsibility for identifying and assessing students at-risk and with special needs. Individual teachers develop strategies to help students succeed. Student work and interventions are reviewed and evaluated infrequently.	It is not clear whether anyone at the school takes responsibility for helping students succeed who are at-risk and have special needs.
Identified students have personal learning plans that prepare them for success in achieving standards. Plans are developed collaboratively with the student, staff, and family. The plans are reviewed and revised as needed.	Most at-risk and special needs students receive guidance in developing personal learning plans with their families. The plans are revised as needed.	Only those at-risk or special needs students supported by categorical programs have personal learning plans.	Student personal learning plans are not addressed.
Students are assessed appropriately and frequently to accurately depict their knowledge and growth. Assessment of EL students is performed in a way that distinguishes the need for content instruction from limited English skills. Students with disabilities receive allowable accommodations or alternative assessments as determined by their IEPs.	Evidence is presented to demonstrate that students at-risk and with special needs are assessed appropriately to accurately depict their knowledge and growth.	There is limited evidence that at-risk and special needs students are appropriately assessed.	Assessment and identification of students at-risk and with special needs are not addressed.
Special education students are provided full access to the standards-based core curriculum. They are transitioned to and supported in mainstream classes, including full inclusion. A school nurse is available to provide or supervise medication administration and specialized physical health care services for students with special needs.	Information is provided on how special education students are successfully transitioned to and supported in mainstream classes.	There are general statements that special education students are being mainstreamed.	If there are special education students, there is no evidence provided that they are being mainstreamed.
EL students receive English Language Development (ELD) standards-based instruction to acquire English language skills. A high redesignation rate of ELs demonstrates provisional success in achieving English proficiency. The continued improvement of redesignated EL students is monitored in relation to their English-speaking peers.	EL students receive ELD standards-based instruction to acquire English language skills. They are provided access to the regular curriculum.	It is not clear that ELs are supported in acquiring English language skills or are provided access to the regular curriculum.	Although school demographics indicate the presence of English learners, there is no evidence of English language acquisition services.
Student differences are valued as assets. Staff receives training on how to maximize the assets of at-risk and special needs students. Examples describe how those assets are purposefully incorporated into classroom activities.	Student differences are valued as assets. Examples describe how those assets are purposefully incorporated into classroom activities.	There is a general discussion of the value of student differences as assets for learning.	There is no discussion of the value of student differences as assets for learning.
The school provides extended learning activities beyond the typical school day, e.g., summer school, before- and after-school programs, tutoring, homework centers, intersessions in year-round schooling, etc. The activities are aligned with standards. Students at-risk are given enrollment priority.	The school provides extended learning activities beyond the typical school day. At-risk students are encouraged to attend.	The school provides a limited amount of extended learning activities beyond the typical school day. Only a few at-risk students attend.	Extended learning activities beyond the typical school day are not discussed.

9 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING: Safe and Healthy School and Coordinated Services Describe how your school ensures a safe and secure learning environment and supports student health. Discuss programs that promote healthy student behaviors and programs that keep the school free from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, crime, and violence. Describe how the school culture and staff promote appropriate student behavior to protect the safety of all, including collaboration with local law enforcement. Discuss how the school supports the coordination of health and social services for students and families in the community. Describe how the school's physical condition reflects the learning environment of an exemplary school.

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
There is a schoolwide focus on student safety, health, and well-being. A Safe School Plan is reviewed and updated yearly. Comprehensive programs are in place to prevent drug, alcohol, and tobacco use; HIV/AIDS and STD; and teenage pregnancy; and to promote healthy behaviors in nutrition and physical activity. A full year of health education is required. Evidence of success in these areas is described. Multiple modules of the California Healthy Kids Survey are administered to a representative sample of students.	There is a schoolwide focus on student safety, health, and well-being. There is a Safe School Plan as required by law. Comprehensive programs promote students' healthy behaviors. One semester of health education is required. Multiple modules of the California Healthy Kids Survey are administered to a representative sample of students.	Policies and procedures are in place that address a secure environment. There is a Safe School Plan as required by law, and programs to promote students' healthy behaviors. There is no separate health education course. The Healthy Kids Survey core module is administered to a representative sample.	Issues relating to student safety and health are generally addressed. There is a Safe School Plan, as required by law. There is no mention of health instruction. There is no discussion of the Healthy Kids Survey.
Physical Education is required for all students at all grade levels. The instructional program reflects the <i>Physical Education Framework</i> and district content standards for physical education, provides grade level specific courses, and is in accordance with the Education Code and State Board policies. In addition to the instructional program, physical activity opportunities include extracurricular activities and organized intramural sports programs. PE credit is not granted for athletics, extracurricular activities, or physical activities outside of school.	Physical Education is required for all students at all grade levels. The instructional program reflects the <i>Physical Education Framework</i> , provides grade level specific courses, and is in accordance with the Education Code and State Board policies. Physical activity opportunities include extracurricular activities and informal intramural sports programs. PE credit is not granted for athletics, extracurricular activities, or physical activities outside of school.	Physical Education is required for all students at all grade levels. The instructional provides grade level courses, and is in accordance with the Education Code and State Board policies. Physical activity opportunities include extracurricular activities. PE credit is not granted for extracurricular activities, or physical activities outside of school.	Physical Education is required for all students at all grade levels. The instructional program provides sequential, learning experiences but may not have grade level specific courses. Course content may repeat from year to year.
Expectations for behavior at school and in the community are well known and accepted by students. School policies and classroom instruction promote socially appropriate behavior and positive relationships, including education on sexual harassment. There are programs to help students learn non-violent ways to deal with conflict and prevent violence. Students' physical, mental and emotional health is addressed with all staff. Evidence of success is provided.	Expectations for behavior at the school and in the community are communicated as needed. Policies and instruction promote socially appropriate behavior. There are programs to prevent violence. Students' physical, mental and emotional health is addressed with most staff.	Expectations for behavior and ways to promote them are not clearly specified. The value of helping students learn to deal with conflict is discussed, but there are no formal programs in place. Students' physical, mental, and emotional health is addressed with some staff.	There is minimal discussion of expectations for student behavior. There is no evidence of efforts to promote socially appropriate behavior. Conflict resolution issues are not addressed. Staff attention to students' physical, mental and emotional health is not discussed.
The school provides students access to support services in physical, mental, and social/emotional health to maximize academic achievement. Well-established partnerships exist with health, mental health and social services, recreation providers, and law enforcement agencies to coordinate services to students and their families. Health services are provided by a credentialed school nurse, or trained and licensed staff supervised by a school nurse.	The school works closely with some health and social services and law enforcement agencies to provide services to students and families. Health services are provided by a credentialed school nurse, or trained and licensed staff supervised by a school nurse.	The school is developing a process for coordinating health and social services for students and families. There is limited collaboration with law enforcement agencies. Services are provided by trained and licensed staff supervised by a credentialed school nurse.	The school may notify families about health, and social services providers as needed, but takes no responsibility beyond that. There is no evidence of collaboration with law enforcement agencies or description of school nurse services.
All elements of the school's physical environment reflect the importance of education in society. District and community resources are provided to ensure that the facilities and campus are clean and in good repair. All school environments are safe, adequate, stimulating, educationally appropriate (e.g., classroom size) and reflect pride in school and student efforts.	The campus is clean and in good repair. Repairs and maintenance are completed as district resources permit. Proactive efforts are ongoing to find supplementary community resources. Classroom environments are stimulating, educationally appropriate (e.g., classroom size) and reflect pride in school and student efforts.	The district and school are exploring resources to make needed repairs or enhance the facilities. The condition of the campus and classrooms does not meet high standards for cleanliness, educational appropriateness, community support, and school pride.	There is minimal evidence of district or school efforts to make needed repairs or to enhance the facilities or campus. The campus and classrooms show evidence of graffiti, disrepair, neglect, and lack of community support and school pride.

10 MIDDLE SCHOOLS—FAMILY PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS Describe the strategies used by your school to engage its families and communities. Describe how members of the school community work together to support student learning, and how families are assisted to be collaborative partners in the education of their children. Describe how the school communicates with families and encourages communication from them, including those who are not fluent in English. Describe school/community partnerships and how community and family resources are used to support student learning, strengthen the curriculum and expand student learning. If the student population is culturally diverse, discuss how the diversity of students' families is acknowledged. *Community partnerships may include, but are not limited to: other middle schools, elementary and high schools; post-secondary institutions; community agencies; law enforcement; service and fraternal organizations; associations and clubs; businesses and industries; labor; government agencies (e.g., state and federal forestry, wildlife, and agricultural agencies, BLM, Caltrans, National Weather Service, etc.); faith-based organizations; colleges and universities; and, other entities unique to the area.*

4. Makes a Strong Case	3. Makes an Adequate Case	2. Makes a Limited Case	1. Makes a Minimal Case
The school has a comprehensive understanding of the community it serves. It has successful strategies to engage the interest of families and other segments of its community and involve them in school activities. The school enjoys a high level of public support.	Many independent connections and activities involve families and the community, but there may not be an ongoing, systematic approach to use those resources.	Efforts are made to accommodate families and community members who offer to participate, but there is no plan for outreach.	The school is aware of the importance of engaging its community, and strategies are being developed.
Families and community members are offered a variety of options for contributing to the success of the school, and many routinely participate in its daily activities.	Some family members regularly volunteer at the school and serve on committees that address both academic and nonacademic issues.	Families participate in fund-raising, extracurricular activities, and booster clubs. They may occasionally serve in advisory roles to offer opinions on policy decisions.	Some families are involved in fund-raising, extracurricular activities, and booster clubs. They are not encouraged to play a role in academic or policy decisions.
In order to promote effective two-way communication, the school employs many proactive strategies appropriate to the community to inform families about school issues as well as community services and resources.	The school communicates with families about school issues and events through traditional methods. Two-way communication between the home and school is encouraged.	The school periodically initiates communication to families about issues and events, and generally responds to inquiries.	Communication between the school and families appears to be limited and generally one way.
Administrators and teachers are trained to work cooperatively with families to support student learning. Parenting/ adult education classes are offered to support student learning. Families and students are assisted during transitions from feeder elementary and destination high schools.	Families receive information about curriculum, assessment and programs to support student learning. Families and students are assisted during transitions from feeder elementary and destination high schools.	Families may receive some information about supporting student learning through parent-teacher conferences, report cards, and newsletters. General statements address helping students transition from elementary schools and to high schools.	Families are not assisted in supporting student learning. There is no evidence that the school helps students transition from elementary schools and to high schools.
The school has well-established collaborative partnerships that provide monetary or material support, expand student learning, and give students opportunities to contribute to the community through service learning, etc. Evidence shows that the partnerships have had a positive impact on student learning.	The school has some school-community partnerships. In addition to providing monetary or materials support, one or more of the partnerships expand student learning and provide opportunities to contribute to their community.	The school may have a few community partnerships and is developing others. Their primary purpose is to provide monetary or material support to the school.	The school is aware of the potential for school-community partnerships, and there are plans to establish some.
If there is cultural diversity in the community, the cultural diversity of families is valued through school-community activities, curriculum enhancements, library materials, etc. Communication is conducted the home language.	If there is cultural diversity in the community, the cultural diversity of families is acknowledged and respected. Communication is often conducted in the home language.	There are general statements about the cultural diversity of families. Communication may sometimes be conducted in the home language	The cultural diversity of families is not acknowledged nor is the issue of home language communication addressed.



Middle Schools - Selected References

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